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There was a time when being a woman was an unlucky fate to be born into, but life isn’t that way in modern countries anymore. There have been three waves of feminists in the past 200 years, mainly taking place in Europe and America. The first wave, which started in the 1850’s, succeeded in acquiring a better educational system for women, women’s marriage rights, and their divorce and child custody rights. The second wave of feminist through the 1960’s consisted of a lot of protesting against sexist features such as the Miss America Pageant, and women obtaining equal rights in the job field such as an equal wage. We are currently living in the third wave of feminist. The third wave is happening now because of the empowerment foundations are giving to girls. Foundations like Dove are working towards teenage girls having a better visual image of themselves and having higher self-esteem. Although the third wave is helping to improve girls self-image, it seems as though society is degrading women into thinking they have to look or act a certain way and transforming their self-confidence into a joke. Society is giving todays females an undignified view of themselves, which enhances girls to feel obligated to mold to the Medias view of them, causes a greater rate in eating disorders, and lower self-esteem in younger teenage girls.

There is no law stating that because a girl is a girl they have to do or dress a certain way. However, studies show that 70% of girls across the nation believe they are not good enough, rather its looks, academics or relationships (Clean Cut Media). The reason for girls feeling this way can’t be that they are simply born into thinking they are worthless. Something has to be happening to make girls feel like they aren’t good enough. Yes, there are bad parents out there, and there are parents who say degrading things to their daughters, but it is inconceivable that out of 70% of girls, all their parents are bad. Where are they getting the idea that they need to be a certain way because they are a girl? The answer is easily the media, and how society pursues a girl’s image. It is easy to see if an individual just realizes what they are watching or looking at. In the line at the grocery store it’s easy for anyone to just pick up a magazine and start reading. In magazines like Teen Vogue or Seventeen there is strict advice on “you should wear this,” or “this is hot, this is not.” Even at a young age girls are being given a view of how they should be in cartoon commercials. Boys are shown building and participating in physical activities 55% of the time on commercials, on the other hand girls are shown in the house talking, gossiping, and observing others 77% of the time in commercials (Awareness Network). It is inevitable that the media has an effect on the way girls perceive themselves. When society through the media is identifying girls to be a certain way, a young girl can’t help but to take it personally and want to mold to the media’s portrayed image. Therefor you have girls that are scared to leave their bedrooms without any make up. Girls that want the best clothing because they are told that is what’s cool. Finally it gets to the point where girls have lost sight of what it means to be their own person.

Out of the 70% of girls who feel as though they are not good enough, 25% of them have an eating disorder (Clean Cut Media). That breaks down into at least 17% of girls across the nation having a sort of eating disorder. Girls feel that they always have to try to be something better than what they are, that where they are at is never good enough. They are unable to accept the idea of loving themselves. When they turn on the television and watch shows like Jersey Shore on MTV, Wizards of Waverly Place on Disney, or even Victorious on Nickelodeon all the girls are skinny and contain what the media portrays a ‘perfect’ body to be. At a young age girls are sent the idea that they need to be skinny. Out of nine and ten year-old girls, 40% of them have tried to lose weight (National institute on Media and the Family). It is not just teenage girls feeling insecure about their bodies anymore; it is little girls who are only in elementary school. One could try to say that maybe society isn’t directing their idea towards girls specifically just people in general, but 90% of eating disorders are cases of girls from the ages of 12 to 21 (The Center for Mental Health Services). The idea of how a girl should look is posted all over the media. Turn the channel, there are skinny girls. Flip the page of a magazine, there are skinny, pretty girls using their looks to sell products. Although the media is now doing shows like I Used To Be Fat, where the concentration is to be a healthier person and not just skinny, they still say after they have lost the weight that “oh, I can go on a date now,” or “boys will actually look at me,” which completely defeats the purpose.

When people have low self-esteem, it can tend to affect their choices in life and has a tendency to enhance people to make worse decisions. 62% of girls are insecure about themselves (Clean Cut Media). Insecurities lead to low self-esteem which is where the bad decisions start. Out of girls with low self-esteem, 75% of them report to having an eating disorder, cutting themselves, and smoking or drinking when they are feeling in the slumps (Clean Cut Media). 25% of girls with low self-esteem admit to cutting themselves (Clean Cut Media). The rates are sky rocketing. An average parent surely cannot want their daughter to be one of these statistics. In all honesty, any average person surely cannot want the girls of their country, their aunts, cousins or nieces feeling that desperately insecure. Some could say that yes, it is normal for people to turn to drugs and alcohol during hard times, but there is no need that girls should be cutting themselves, giving themselves literal injuries. There is absolutely no reason girls should be starving themselves, or going on binges and forcing themselves to throw up everything they eat. Why is it happening? The only conclusion there is, is society itself. Today’s society is completely destroying girl’s confidence. They use the media to sell their products, but all it really ends up doing is filling the hearts and desires of young girls with an anxious hunger to be perfect. They are unable to see that there is no such thing as perfect, and they are going to all extreme measures in order to reach an impossible and disgraceful goal of perfection.

We are supposed to be the third wave of feminist. At least that’s what ‘they’ say, but how can we really call ourselves the third wave of feminist when the girls of our nation are dry of confidence and pride in being a woman? Society is using today’s advanced technologies through the media to fog girls’ visions of what is attainable and important in life. Being skinny, having a flawless face and a perfect all around body is not the true significance to life, but in these girls’ minds, it is their significance to life. No girl should feel like they are not good enough, but almost three quarters of girls do. To truly be the third wave of feminist, we have to make a difference in the minds of girls everywhere. To ensure them they are important and beautiful regardless of what anyone says.